

# *Sketch*

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Joanne

Dwyer Duncan\*

\*Iowa State College

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# Joanne

Dwyer Duncan

## **Abstract**

Joanne was well satisfied with her afternoon of shopping. The few packages she carried added immeasurably to her feeling of security and well-being. Only one more payment to go until she owned her first silver fox, or any other fur for that matter...

"Of course I should. Anyway, she looked perfectly charming in her bare feet. She reminded me of Lola Thisbe."

"Lola who?" I said.

"Lola Thisbe," he replied. "The girl had never wrecked a railroad, but you had only to look into her deep black eyes to know that her destructive period was about to begin. Now come on, step on it, or we'll be late for dinner."

—J. C. Mathews, *Sci. Jr.*



## *Joanne*

Joanne was well satisfied with her afternoon of shopping. The few packages she carried added immeasurably to her feeling of security and well-being. Only one more payment to go until she owned her first silver fox, or any other fur for that matter. She always liked to pay cash for everything, but that coat was an exception. It was so beautiful and she just had to have it when it was put on a summer sale.

A conveniently located door just outside the shopping district prompted her to pause. "May as well have a drink before I have to go to work," she thought.

The interior of the cocktail lounge was very dim and quiet. Three expanding business men didn't turn from the bar when Joanne seated herself at a small, round table near the wall and across the room from the bar. She crossed her legs and adjusted her skirt to get the desired length and glanced approvingly at her new suede shoes.

The bartender with an appraising eye abandoned wiping the bar and came over to her table.

"What's yours, Miss?"

"Pink Lady."

She rearranged her packages on a chair beside her and took a bill from her purse while the bartender shook a shiny mixer. He poured her drink and resumed wiping the bar.

A few men drifted in and attached themselves to the bar. One tall young man walked over to her table and spoke, "Excuse me, but aren't you Joanne Summerfield?"

"Why, Dan Kobelt, what are you doing in town? I haven't seen you since a couple of years after we got out of high school."

"Oh, I'm travelling for Bacone Steel now and can't contact one of my best customers until morning. I'm glad I bumped into you because I have the whole evening to kill. I didn't even know you were in town."

"Yeah, Dan, Ramsey got a little dull so I came to the city."

"Well I don't blame you. Besides being one of the prettiest girls in Ramsey you were a darned good secretary. Are you still sitting on some guy's lap?"

"In a way. I haven't stayed too long at any one place; I like to float around without being tied down."

"It's a good thing you got out of Ramsey then."

"Yeah, I guess I'd still be a clerk typist at the gas company, making a hundred-sixty a month."

"You darned sure couldn't stop in at a bar either. Let's have another and go out to dinner if you're not busy."

"That's a date. I know a swell place where we can get good Italian food and have a little quiet so we can talk."

A short while later Dan held his car door for Joanne. She dropped her bundles between them on the seat and relaxed with the comfort of effortless riding.

"Just go east on Broadway until I tell you to turn."

"Okay, Jo, you're the boss tonight."

"Well, you sure didn't feel that way the night we double-dated for the prom. What's happened?"

"Nothing's happened, I just didn't want to be pushed around. Now if you and I had been alone, we wouldn't have had any trouble. I didn't want to double-date anyhow."

"Dan, I explained all that to you before. You know Bill didn't have a car, and Sally was my best friend. I couldn't turn her down when she asked about going with us."

"Yeah, I know it. Let's just drop it, Jo, that was ten years ago and I don't want to go over it again."

"All right, go two more blocks and you'll see a sign that says "Little Italy." Just turn in there and we can forget about everything that happened before."

Her spirits mounted as they had dinner and danced. She

felt younger than she had felt since coming to the city five years before. The sparkle in her eyes contrasted with the soft, golden tan of her complexion when they moved near the lights of the bandstand. Tonight she felt even younger and was sorry to see Dan pocket their check.

Dan was telling her about his job when he was suddenly aware that they were nearing the loop.

"Where do you live, Jo?"

"Oh, just drop me off at third and Cleveland. I'd ask you up to my apartment, but I don't want to wake my girl friend."

"Oh, that's all right, it's late now and I can always get in touch with you when I'm in town. I'm in the city about every other week and I sure would have looked you up if I'd known you were here."

She wrote her telephone number on one of Dan's order blanks and gave it to him.

"I'll phone you just as soon as I get in town the next time, and we'll make a few red marks along the main drag."

He stopped the car at the corner of third and Cleveland. He touched her hand.

"Can't I go to the door with you, Jo?"

"No, that's all right, I'll make it. I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed everything, Dan. Just being able to talk to someone I've known for a long time is something I really needed, and talking to the guy I used to date has been something pretty special."

"Yeah, I know what you mean. I get lonesome as Hell on the road and wish I had someone like you to talk to. I sure want to see you again when I'm in this neck of the woods."

"Well, you be sure to call me, and I'll be there," she said as she stepped out and closed the door of the car.

Dan watched her until she turned the corner. He started the car again and rolled away from the curbing. He turned the corner and thought he saw Joanne enter one of the doors under a canopy. This was a pretty nice neighborhood. Jo must be doing all right. She hadn't changed much either. Now that he had her phone number he could get in touch with her again. She really wasn't bad at all, good looking,

dressed well, and she had brains or she couldn't live in a place like that. He'd have to call her the next time he was through.

"Where have you been, Jo?" a smoothly painted blonde asked when Joanne entered the apartment. "There's a convention down at the Broadview, and all those guys are hotter'n minks and loaded with dough. I've had three at ten bucks a crack, and I'm all ready to go again."

Joanne went into the bedroom and began to apply fresh lipstick. The brown suit she was wearing would be all right for the rest of the evening. She removed her new shoes and wriggled her toes in the welcome coolness of the air.

"Are you about ready?" the girl called from another room.

"Aw Hell, Jacque, you go ahead; I don't think I want to work tonight."

—Dwyer Duncan, *Sci. Sr.*



## *The Liberated*

"**H**AIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." The voice is strange. It doesn't make sense as you shuffle slowly along the passageway in the early morning. As you pass the midships hatch, you pause. The early morning air still carried the foul, rotten smell that was there when you went to bed.

"Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus."

You look outside the hatch with buggy eyes. They still smart and sting from the rubbing you gave them a few moments ago in an attempt to wake up.

A line of human forms silhouette themselves against the morning dawn. You wonder how and where they came from.